



MEMOIRS OF A MAN
AND HIS DOG

OR

TRAINING A SPRINGER
ON MANITOBA PRAIRIES

by

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To

THE GUN DOG CLUB OF MANITOBA AND
MEN AND BOYS ANYWHERE, EVERYWHERE
WHO LOVE DOGS, GUNS, AND THE GREAT
OUT OF DOORS, THIS WORK IS DEDICATED.

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INTRODUCTION

This is the story of a man and his hunting dog—a Springer Spaniel. I am moved to set down these pages by two things. First, perhaps the more compelling, the desire to live over again, in memory, the simple pleasures of days spent with my four-legged friend. Second, by the requests of many who themselves would like to train a hunting dog.

I know that it has been commonly thought that the mysteries of dog training are beyond the common man; that the possession of a well-trained hunting dog is only possible to the man of means, who can buy the services of a professional trainer. My belief and my experience is that, if he has the will (and the patience), the ordinary man can have such a dog as he could never get — and keep — from a professional.

You can not buy a dog which will remain perfect; once the pro has parted with him to a man who has put nothing into the dog but his money, deterioration begins. A dog is not a mechanical gadget that will indefinitely do this or that when this or that button is pushed. Lack of knowledge, dog sense, patience, interest, are the reasons the education of the dog starts downhill. On the other hand, the education of one's own dog may go on indefinitely, and year by year he should be a better hunting companion.

In conclusion, may I say that, although this book centres around the Springers, everything which is said is applicable to the Cocker; and so, my hunting friends say, to all the bird hunting dogs, save pointers and setters. In reality, it is the experience of one man with one dog. These methods worked, and very successfully. Other methods may work—may even be better for aught I know—but these to me are tried and proven. For what they may be worth to you, I pass them on.



"GERRY"

CHAPTER ONE

THE URGE

I suppose there are few men or boys who have not at some time felt the urge to have their own hunting dog. It is no doubt a throw-back to man's early history when, with club in hand, he spent the day in the forest, seeking the family food. At that time, he already had his hunting dogs to assist him. Probably they were of more value in their aid than hunting dogs of today, when modern fire-arms at least make it possible to bring down game with some certainty once it has been located. However, having the urge and owning a dog are two different things, particularly after one has attached to himself a wife. I suppose in those early days of man's history I have referred to, his help-mate looked on the family hound as an encumbrance around the cave, which eternally had to be watched lest he steal Junior's bone. Perhaps even in those days, she looked on the family hunting dog with some suspicion as a constant distraction to the master from his necessary household tasks of putting on the storm windows and other chores. In my case, the helpmate was a city girl who could see nothing to this dog business around a house, but who as a good sport would compromise by allowing a pussy cat on which the family affection might be lavished. Well, that just didn't click. What would you think?

So time passed on, and eventually a man who owned lots of Springers became indebted to me in a substantial sum for law fees. I took a Springer (at a good fat price) and turned it over to a friend who had better family control. This was early spring. That autumn he invited me to shoot prairie chickens (to me, the king of all sports) with him, over the pup, then eight or nine months old.

That day will live forever in my memories; and completely fixed in my mind the idea that some day, some way, I would have a Springer of my own. As our experiences of the day showed the value of a hunting dog to the sportsmen, I relate what happened.

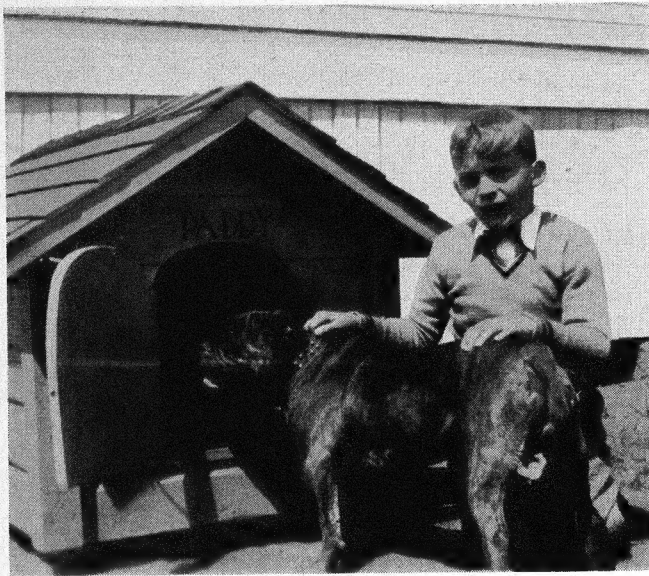
It was late, say 10:30 a.m., when we reached the chosen hunting ground. The game had left the stubble fields for the poplar bluffs. The weather was ideal, warm and bright. The autumn tints were on the leaves. A perfect day in the open was before us, if only we found the odd chicken. We stopped beside a likely stubble field surrounded by scattered bush. Our companion car went further on.

Our choice proved not such a good locality (we picked up a couple); so in an hour we followed the other car, which was visible a mile away parked by the roadside. As we approached, our friends returned from a fruitless hunt over an entire section of wild land. No chickens—we must journey further afield. It seemed unfortunate, because never would you see more ideal chicken country. Small clumps of poplar and willow dotted the whole section, perhaps twenty yards wide and fifty to one hundred yards long. In between was meadow, much of it mown. On three sides of the wild section were wheat fields. Well! How disappointing!

Before going on, the decision was for lunch; so out came lunch baskets and thermos flasks. Basking in the hot September sun, we sat by the side of a clump of poplar, no bigger than three motor cars closely parked, I should say. After twenty minutes of noisy luncheon preparation, Gerry, the pup, became restless and moved into the bush to investigate something his puppy nose told him was there. "Kuk-a-kuk-kuk"—the beat of frantic wings, and away went three prairie chickens, so close that they looked like baby haystacks in the air. Of course, no one had a gun in reach; but it gave my friend an idea. "If they are sitting that close, perhaps there are chicken in other clumps these men have hunted without success. Let's take a circle for fifteen minutes before going on."

Then the fun started. If the dog went in, out from practically every clump boomed a chicken or two. If we hunted down the side of a small clump, a man on each side, but without the dog, nothing happened. If Gerry followed after, from the same clump would leap a terror struck chicken. As the dog worked a bluff, you could see them running to the open and taking off with the usual heartstopping uproar of beating wings. Only, when you saw them coming, the heartstopping was not so complete as is usual.

In an hour, I suppose we had collected fifteen chicken from the section our friends (with no dog) had prospected and reported barren. So much for the hunting effectiveness of the dog. In addition, it was a pleasure to watch that pup sit down and wait for a chicken to be pulled down out of the sky, then enthusiastically retrieve when the master gave permission. The tailwagging (by which the Springer telegraphs not only that he is on game, but the amount of his personal enthusiasm) was simply tremendous. I have seen Gerry win two Manitoba Field Trials since then, but last to fade from my memory of him will be what was, probably, his first day of real hunting. Perhaps, I too, like Gerry, was having a new and a fascinating experience, the added joy of the hunter which comes from the zest and obvious pleasure of his four-footed helper. The die was cast. I must—I would have a Springer of my own.



"PADDY"

CHAPTER TWO

PADDY

The hunting dog did not come overnight. The way was long and tortuous. Paddy was the tortuous part. The children should really have a dog to teach them unselfishness—to care for something helpless and dependent. And so Paddy came into our lives. He was an English bulldog. He was also what is known amongst humans as a “character”; he had personality plus. He was the stuff that legends are made of and from the time he first came to us until his final taking off he was always doing something interesting, though oftentimes provoking and oftentimes expensive. Paddy has been gone for years, and if I met a stranger to-morrow from the far side of this city of a quarter million people, I would not be in the slightest surprised if he started the conversation by asking about Paddy. Then I would hear another of his unique adventures.

Paddy came to us from the humble background of the City Pound; but he was obviously of blood royal. How he got there we later found out; and that, too, was one of his adventures. He was ugly; his face would stop a clock. Let no young man or woman ever suffer from an inferiority complex because he or she is not good-looking. Paddy had more warm friends and admirers in our city than any other member of the family. He went after friends when he needed them and he always got them.

For instance, one day he wanted a car ride (of which he was very fond); so he stepped into the open door of a truck being refueled in a service station, and solemnly sat down on the seat. When the driver returned to the car, he was afraid to chuck him out, so Paddy rode with him all day, and in the evening the driver let him out where he had picked him up, or rather where Paddy had picked up the truck. By that time, Paddy had had enough and was willing to descend. The result was that Paddy had another ardent admirer. Although a fearsome sight, he never bit anyone, or growled at anyone; and if he made faces, it was only because he could not help it.

I am sure that Paddy would have shared his last crust with a burglar. He adored babies and any baby carriage on the street would have him permanently attached as a sort of outrider, for duration of the journey, as soon as he had glimpsed it. He never started a fight and never refused one, unless with a dog much smaller than himself. For such he held a silent contempt as opponents. One expression of his contempt for such a would-be opponent and all connected with him has become legendary.

Paddy loved to go for walks with any member of the family. On one occasion he had strolled with me into a barber shop and there, as usual, had flopped into a deep slumber as soon as apparent the stay would be protracted. One side of the room had a counter behind which a tradesman carried on a watch repair business. The door opened and a man accompanied by a black Pom weighing perhaps four or five pounds entered. He turned to the counter, leaning against it as he talked quietly to the tradesman. The Pom was not so quiet. He spied the sleeping beauty and leaped at him snarling fiercely. Paddy arose, turned his head, and with dignity walked the length of the shop. The Pom kept at his shoulder snapping and snarling. Paddy walked back to the same accompaniment. When he reached the little dog's master again, he stopped behind him and treated the boss with just as little respect as he would a fire

hydrant. "That for you, your boss too," he seemed to say as he marched off followed by the stifled laughter of all present (save the Pom's master).

But give him a big dog, or two big dogs, better still three big dogs, or best of all four big dogs, and Paddy was all set for a nice party. I think the big dogs in the neighbourhood were provoked at his stupidity that he never could seem to understand when he was licked. This is the only explanation I can give for the fact that they used to gang up on him four at a time; something I never heard of before or since. The commencement needed no excuse or diplomatic incident. When Paddy appeared in a certain district near by his home, the call went forth. I remember a very brave lady calling up one evening.

Our dog was in her house, would we please come and get him as she dared not turn him out. Four dogs were fighting him as she passed on the sidewalk. He was, by long odds, the smallest of the lot and it looked like a massacre; so she removed her belt, to be used as a weapon, waded into the fray and rescued him (probably much against his will). As there were two large collies and two large police dogs in the pack, I venture to say her heart was in her mouth. I salute her courage.

The son and heir recounts another heroic battle with four dogs, probably the same four, which ended only when Paddy had slain two of them. Frankly, I suspect a build-up for Paddy in the story, but he says, "Cross my heart. Hope to die."

Paddy had failings, however. One was that he had no bump of direction. When we first got him, if he went around the block, he was lost. Unfortunately this made little or no difference to Paddy. Like Old Man River, he "jes kept rollin' along". Eventually, when hunger called, or it became too cold, or he was sleepy, he scratched at some convenient door. The door would open and Paddy would put on his act; and so far as I can find out it never failed. He would hold up a front paw as he half crouched, looking soulfully into the face of his rescuer. His big brown eyes would fill with tears and he would shiver and shake as though in the last extremity. Sure he was taken in. Sometimes it was in the far end of the city, St. Boniface, St. Vital or just a block or two from home. These last cases were pure impositions on the public, as he did learn eventually, to find his way about when within a couple of miles from home. His collar plate would be inspected and then would come the telephone call we learned so well to know. "Have you lost a bulldog . . . He came to our door shivering with cold" etc. He probably had just left home ten minutes before but was trying to sponge a meal of doughnuts or some such dainty forbidden at home. Anyway, he had gained a new and lifelong friend. It is said that if you want to make a true friend, let some one do something for you. Paddy was one of the first psychologists to realize this and capitalize on it.

Well, to continue, the next step was to locate whoever had the family car, often with some trouble, and arrange for his deportation. This became such a nuisance that some member of the family would go after him in a taxi. Then finally, it got so the taxi company was asked to send a car for Paddy. He would come riding home in state, sitting alone on the back seat, looking out the window with a royal air of dignity.

However, the stays at home became shorter. He became more and more the citizen of the world. He seemed just as happy with his newest acquaintance as in his

own home. As a result, in the last three months he was nominally our dog, he was not home three weeks. If ever one had itchy feet, it was he. So finally, I gave him to a dog lover in a small town. So small, indeed, was the place, that he could not get lost.

A few years after, I made a fifty mile journey to see him and to learn how he prospered. Alas, he was no more! His incorrigible taste for excitement had led him into playing havoc with the neighbours' pigs and chickens and he had to be destroyed. I can well imagine what happened. In our trips to the country with Paddy, it had been his dearest pleasure to get a lusty porker by the hind leg, then shut his eyes and go limp while the pig jerked him about and squealed fit to wake the dead, as the old saying has it.

Thus passed Paddy. If there be a canine heaven and hell, I'm sure that Beelzebub daily shakes with laughter as he contemplates Paddy's latest escapade. I know he will not rest in peace, nor any about him. He would not enjoy it, so I do not utter the stereotyped "Requiescat in pace".



"SALLY"
ALLISON OF AVANDALE
Our Heroine.

CHAPTER THREE

THE COMING OF SALLY

Paddy's passing left a void in our home. These stirring characters are wearing but of a certainty they are missed when they go. This, then, was the time to produce my Springer. And it worked.

I arranged for a pup from a litter which boasted a royal lineage in both bench and field trial records. The pups were in the country; but finally the great day came. They had arrived at the kennel and the choice might now be made. Choosing a pup, if you want him for field work, is a serious business; but I, in my ignorance, assumed the responsibility myself. Fortunately, I have had no cause for regret.

I chose a female because I believed she would stay at home better (an important point after living with Paddy). She does, although I must say I did not fully appreciate the number of boy friends who were also going to make an earnest endeavour to live with us. I also believed a female would not be so headstrong and opinionated (supposed to vary from the human species). However, when you make your choice, remember that twice a year you will have to lock your female up for three weeks or send her to a kennel; unless, of course, you want to have her spayed, which I intended to do. Before doing so, I decided she should complete her biological cycle and have young. The pups were so uniformly good (so the kennel man said), it seemed a shame to sacrifice so good a dam. In addition, some rumours have it, the urge to hunt is dulled and the bitch gets fat and lazy. Besides, the pups were cute and I might like some day to have more. Most men choose dogs which are not so much trouble, except to your neighbour who owns a bitch.

The choice of puppies is usually made when they are one month old at least. I suppose my choice was made when the pups were six weeks old. For a hunting dog, one wants lots of life and energy and as much intelligence as you can get. By observing, you can make some comparisons on these two points. It is my view that a Springer should, for a city dog anyway, be rather on the small side. He will be in your house three hundred and sixty days of the year, and in the field the other five. The big dogs are out of place in a house; and I am not so sure that the smaller Springers are not every bit as good in the field anyway, though some say otherwise. Of course, they should not be too small. For instance, a dog not much bigger than a Cocker would be too puttery and probably could not stand a day's shooting in the field, although, at that, I have friends who tell me it is surprising what a Cocker can do.

Choose a pup which is not afraid or nervous. Boldness in the field is an advantage. The experts say that if a pup wets you when picked up, it indicates nervousness and timidity. He should be rejected. I pass it on for what it is worth. It seems rather a harsh verdict, if applied to the human species anyway. Most of the babies I have picked up would have been drowned if this test were applicable to them.

Well, my choice was Sally (later to become Allison of Avandale), a liver and white bitch, medium size. I thought that she was full of life, which means hunting zest, not too nervous, and had intelligence. I was not disappointed.

CHAPTER FOUR

AND AFTER

Now I had my Springer. However, she could not be removed as she had to be wormed. All pups, it appears, pick up worms and must be treated just after weaning, which occurs at about one month.

Treatment consists of a medicine which kills the worms and physics the pup also. Before this operation was completed she got distemper and then the mange. She wasted away to skin and bone, her nose ran, her eyes watered and half her hair was gone. She had lost all her affectionate playfulness, one of the things which had endeared her to me. At last I could bear it no longer, so I took her home regardless. She was housed in Paddy's kennel, which he had scorned to use and which still bears his name over the door.

Medicine and lots of good food soon cured the distemper—but mange! She looked a scarecrow and you could see that she was even ashamed of herself. A trip to the vet brought advice that she should be destroyed if I could get another dog for her, as it was worth more than a new dog to cure her. "Too bad," he said, "because she's a smart little thing."

No! My dog was not going to be destroyed. From fear of contagion, the vet would not take her in nor treat her; so every night for six weeks she got a bath with some oily mixture at home. It was rough on the master; but eventually she fully recovered.

Now just a word to the dog owner to be. Your pup should be wormed. When it is three months old, or thereabout, it should be innoculated for distemper; otherwise, you stand a good chance of losing your pup within the first year. If it has had distemper and recovered, it will never have it again, so in that case, inoculation is unnecessary.

You will probably find, as I did, that your pup will moan and cry to himself the first night, if left alone. He is lonesome—never has he been away from mother or brothers and sisters before. It will probably bring a lump into your throat but there is nothing you can do for the little beggar as he is not likely house-broken. If you take him to bed with you, the results will most likely be unfortunate. In a day or two he will get over his lonesome feeling at night, so do not worry too much.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE TRAINING OF A HUNTING DOG

Before commencing, it is well to advise the beginner that the successful training is not a difficult task. Human nature is prone to visualize the unknown path as one strewn with difficulties. That is why we are so unwilling to attempt it. By over-emphasizing the difficulties you can deprive yourself of many undreamed of pleasures in life, and dog training is one. Remember that hunting and retrieving are instinctive to your dog and your task is only to control or direct those instincts.

You will find, or should find, that the lessons to your pup are entertaining and pleasurable to you as well as the dog. Since they involve a certain amount of exercise, and that in the open air, you will find it healthful as well. Do not let the thought of arduous toil deter you. No set time is necessary. You can utilize a few spare moments here and there, as other tasks permit. In fact, the best way to approach the subject is to consider the training as "playing with the pup for a few minutes." Your attitude of mind should be the same as when you take a few moments off to teach your child to walk or practice his first attempts to master the English language. Remember also, that lessons should not be continued too long. When the pup begins to tire, loses his zest for school, classes should close down and preferably before that stage arrives.

If you are going to make this attempt, make up your mind to one thing—never lose your temper. The teacher must have a great store of patience; but most of us are the better for a little training in that virtue. The teacher must be kindness personified at all times. Be not sparing in your expressions of praise. There will be material rewards to the successful student, as I shall later explain, in the earlier stages, but even then, petting and verbal approbation should be lavishly bestowed. Punishment may be necessary later; but never until you are sure that the pupil well knows what he should do and is deliberately disobeying. Rebuke by a sharp tone of voice should be the main punishment, and corporal punishment comes only in the later stages, if ever, and that sparingly. The voice, at all times, should be natural and conversational, no shouting. One should never by voice tones reveal any inward turmoil of the teacher, as that alone will distract the pupil and take its mind off the task at hand. Even if you have to whip the dog, do not speak angrily; use the same tones. After the punishment be kindly and friendly at all times. Also remember that the teacher must be firm and once the pupil knows the commands, he must always be required to obey fully once the command is given. It would be fatal to give your dog the idea that he need only obey when he feels like it. The commands or signals for individual tasks should always be the same. They should be enunciated sharply and clearly and should be as simple as possible. These will be suggested later. Other words may be used if you desire; but always the same, and the words used for the different commands should be quite distinctive, for your pupil, remember, has a simpler intelligence than you (probably).

Being friendly and kindly to your pup is not enough to establish the most effective relationship between you. Others will also treat him with kindness and affection. To be simply another good fellow to your dog is not enough. Nothing, in the field, is more aggravating than to have your own dog deliver his retrieve to any person who happens to be about. Nothing, unless it be for your dog to decide, when he hears a shot in the near distance, that there is more excitement over yonder, and he deserts you for another member of the shooting party. Your dog must think that you are the centre of the universe. He must have eyes and ears for you alone. How can this happy end be achieved? A good friend of mine gave me a tip when I first got Sally.

"If you want her to look up to you as her supreme being, to obey you and to look upon you always as the big boss whom she must ever strive to please, you must feed her yourself, you and you alone."



**THE HUNTING
PARTY**

The gentleman on the right once
owned a Green Head Drake.

"Well, if that is so, she must differ widely from the female of the human species, because I have been doing that very thing for a quarter of a century without anything like the greatly to be desired results you picture."

He agreed that it was a virtue peculiar to the canine race; so I tried it out. The results in that field are good. In all seriousness I say—feed your own dog your very own self. At the same time, I suggest you combine feeding with a distinctive call, which at first, means "hurry up for a meal." Soon it will mean a call to come at once to the master, and with all speed. In training and shooting in the field, you will find it very useful to have a signal which brings your dog rapidly to your feet. My signal is a whistle, one long, four short and one long. This is by the way. Speaking of a dog's personal loyalty to the master, I remember two incidents, both rather amusing.

When Sally was a two-year-old, a shooting companion called me to him on the far side of a small grove. "I dropped a chicken, dead," he said, "in this scrub. I saw just where it fell but I haven't been able to find it with five minutes searching."

So we all, there were three of us, commenced to search. In only a couple of moments I felt something brush my hand and there was Sally trying to thrust the dead chicken into my hand. She had come up from behind, and where she got it nobody ever did find out. As a joke, I started to thrust it into my shooting coat, remarking, so as to draw attention, just as it disappeared, "It's going to be hard work for you fellows to get a bag today."

The second time was in the duck marsh. I was shooting with a friend who had shot many times with Sally and me, and he thought that Sally and he were good friends. I had left the canoe in a hide with my friend and waded to shore, across a point through the most impenetrable tangle of reeds eight feet high. Perhaps we were one hundred yards apart. The point was soft mud and the water was only a couple of inches below the surface. As it was late fall, I permitted Sally to hunt through the reeds to keep her from freezing. Eventually, she came out on the other shore line, and there saw half a dozen dead ducks around the reed island concealing my friend. Let him tell it.

"She came splashing through the mudflat, passed me with only a friendly wag of her tail and picked out a lovely green headed drake. I was pleased to see her bringing it to me, and I praised her as a good dog. But she passed me again. I called her to bring it to me but she only gave me a disdainful look and kept right on going. I thought it very amusing and I called across to the third member of the party telling him we would get some fun by having you recount how you pulled that choice green head out of the clouds with a miracle shot."

As a matter of fact, the joke was on him, for Sally had scarcely disappeared into the jungle of reeds when I did drop a duck in the reeds, and obviously only winged. As I would never get him, I whistled for Sally, giving the signal which means between us, "come in at once at full speed." She did not come with her usual haste, so I gave the imperative signal again and again. Finally she turned up, minus the green head, which, of course, I did not know she was supposed to have. I can visualize the predicament the little lady found herself in. The big drake catching again and again in the reeds, and holding her back, while that peremptory command sounded time after time. Nobody could criticize her decision very much but the joke was on my humorous friend. He was close enough when she passed him to have reached out and rescued his duck.

CHAPTER SIX

THE FIRST STEPS

I am not going to say very much about house-breaking the pup. The Springer is a very clean dog and is not hard to train. A good scolding and a slight cuff at the scene of the accident will be all that is necessary. However, give the pup a chance. See that he is let out of the house several times a day and always, without fail, shortly after a meal. There may be some who never let the dog into the house but I think this is not right for a city dog. The Springers are very fond of people. They do not see much of the family if they live in a back-yard. It is a lonely life for him and, besides, you will not get the best team work unless you are intimate with your dog. You should know how his mind works and he should understand you. It will be to your ultimate gain, therefore, to invite him into your home. In doing so, I would recommend that, from the very first, you insist on good manners. No crawling on chairs, no romping and no jumping up on people. Once he gets the habit of doing any one of these you are headed for grief. It may not be serious as a pup; but pups grow up. You will probably get enough legitimate criticism from the lady of the house through the years without giving any unnecessary cause for it. There is no necessity for these bad manners if the first few breaches are checked. If you visualize the possibility of damage and destruction from a Springer's wet or muddy feet from the very first, you will never fall into the error of permitting these faults.

HEEL

A command which should early be taught any dog, hunting or other, is "Heel". You will find it a very present help, in all kinds of trouble. When you go for a walk in the city, there are times when your dog cannot safely roam at a distance. It may be crossing a busy intersection — when hostile dogs are about — or, just as bad, cats — or motor cars. When shooting in the field, there will be times when you want the dog out of the way while, perhaps, you walk up on game. At field trials your dog must stick to you like a leech when you are approaching the judges to commence your test. No matter where you are, when you desire to have the most complete control of your dog, for any purpose, he should be as close to you as possible. The closest possible position is the heel position.

One of the great pleasures of the dog owner is to go for walks with his dog, and I imagine you will be taking your pup for a walk before you have had him many days. He will, of course, be on a leash. Give the command "heel", distinctly but in a conversational tone; then pull him to your side and slightly behind you, as you walk. After a time, the leash may be slackened. If he gets out of position, jerk him back into the proper position again, giving the command clearly. After a time he will connect the command with the position. It will help him to stay in position if you talk to him while in the proper place, thus taking his mind off cats and other dogs etc., which normally cause distraction. Once having given the command, and the dog having assumed the position, he should not be allowed to leave it until given permission. Personally, I use the command, "Away you go". It will emphasize the lesson if you release your dog frequently during the walk and then, in a moment or two, make him again "heel".

I imagine there will be at least one day you will be very thankful your pup is well broken to heel. That will be the day you first take him shooting. After he has broken all the laws you have so carefully taught him, and has worn himself out, you will be very thankful if you can call him to heel, forget about him and go on for a bit of quiet enjoyment, shooting as though you were not a dog trainer. In fact, you will probably both appreciate and enjoy that quiet and lucid interval. I did not try it, but it might be a very useful introduction to the hunting field if the pup were kept entirely at heel during his first day.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE HUP

Probably the most important command, and one of the most useful first steps in training certainly, is "Hup". This means that your dog is supposed to sit down on his or her "fanny", as the youth of today call it. If you can get your dog so well broken to this signal that he will immediately obey, you can use it as a sort of military "as you were" while you straighten out training tangles or even to give the pupil a chance to get over his excitement.

When your pup is three months old, you can start this training, perhaps a little before, and I suppose, as I said before, up to any age, if your dog as a pup has learned obedience. When you take out the dish containing the dog's meal to him, tell him to "hup". He won't know what it means, of course, so gently take him by the collar with one hand, place the other on his back over the hips and press him into a sitting position. Keep repeating the word firmly. He will, of course, bounce up again. Repeat the process. Do not forget — every time he gets into the hup position, to praise him and pat him liberally. When finally he has done the routine half a dozen times, call him to his meal, "Come, Jocko," or any other signal you wish, provided you always use the same one.

After a few lessons, he will get the idea and sit down on command. If he keeps getting up as soon as released, hold him by the collar; move his food about, and if he attempts to stand up press him back. Once having started this, do it every time you feed him until the lesson is learned.

For the next step, I suggest you supply yourself with a card-board container small enough to go in your pocket. Also arrange that the lady of the house keep a constant supply of weiners in the refrigerator. Cut two or three up into pieces half an inch long; fill up your card-board box and you are all set for an hour's training. Other foods will do as well but weiners are clean to handle and easy to get. I would recommend that the training start in the back-yard, say, or some familiar spot to the pup with no one around to distract him.

Walk out into the yard, the pup gamboling by your side. Stop and say "Hup", clearly and firmly. If he does not sit down, act as before, press him down. Then praise and pet him and finish off with a morsel of weiner. It will not be long before he has the idea. Then try the command farther and farther away. Give the command under all possible circumstances eventually, but always remember you must do the easy things first and work up to the harder. Soon you will be able to go for a walk and practise the hup as you go. You will be astonished how quickly the dog will get the idea. As you try the more difficult tests from day to day, you will find your dog will be quite proud of his accomplishments; and unless I am greatly mistaken, you will be quite as pleased as he.

It is not usual nor is it practicable to give commands in the fields by voice. Sooner or later you will require a whistle and I suggest you should get it now. Get a good one that will last. Get a distinctive one if you can which your dog will learn to recognize as his.

Now blow the whistle once and then say "hup" without any interval of time. After he has connected the two, which he will probably do in one evening, blow the whistle alone, and he will probably sit down without further command. Certainly he will look to you expecting something further. If you also continue to look at him expectantly, he will after some delay sit down. If not, say "hup", as though you were surprised he had not done so. Then try again. And don't forget! Praise him and pet him freely as well as rewarding with weiners.

When the pup knows that the signals are interchangeable, practise him on both frequently, even when a mature dog. You will take many a walk with your dog after his intensive training days are over. It is a good practise to fasten the whistle on a leash, then take both every time you go for a walk. During the course of the walk run through the signals at least once or twice.

The advantage of using a whistle is that you may exercise effective control at much greater distances. Another aid to control is visual and this also aids in distance work where the voice cannot reach or where it is embarrassing to speak as when you may suspect game in the immediate vicinity.

Very early in the training on the "hup" signal, start raising your right arm, pointing to the zenith. Use this constantly with the verbal command or the whistle and soon you will find your dog will sit down to the upraised arm.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE GUN

It goes without saying that a hunting dog must be familiar with a gun and early learn to work with it. I well remember an amusing and yet pitiful spectacle one early morning in the chicken shooting season. We were hunting in a well-wooded section and had heard shooting some distance to our right, although the hunters were not visible. Shortly, a nice looking Spaniel tore out of the bush and at full terrified speed rushed down the road. As far as we could see, he was still running. In about ten minutes, he was followed by a sportsman enquiring if we had seen a hunting dog. When we last saw him, he also was hurrying down the road, sweating and no doubt cussing. It was a beautiful autumn morning, warm, with the sun shining brightly. The woods a glow of orange, yellow, red and brown amongst the green, but for one man the day was utterly ruined even if he succeeded in finding the dog after a couple of hours' search. The cause of it all was, no doubt, he had taken a green dog into the hunting field—probably nervous and high strung as a good dog should be—and started blazing guns off all about him. The dog was frightened out of his life and very likely ruined for ever after.

It was a cruel and foolish thing to do. Cruel because the poor brute was frantic with fear; foolish because the master threw away that morning whatever was of value in his dog and lost the future joy which he might have had for years in hunting with a trained companion. A good many men have thought because a dog was of hunting lineage it was born with a knowledge of guns and hunting that men themselves gain only after years of experience.

I urge you, therefore, to be most careful in breaking in your dog to the gun. As a preliminary step, I suggest that at an early stage in the training you invest in a child's cap pistol. After your dog has learned to "hup" on command, take the pistol with his dish of food into the yard where the pup is. Say "hup" at the same time firing the pistol. He will be so engrossed with the prospect of a meal that he will not become very much alarmed over the unusual noise. Keep this up and soon he knows the pistol also means "hup".

Now you are at the very heart of the training of a gun dog. Perhaps you have been wondering why all this stress on hup. A dog must sit down and keep out of the way when the shooting starts. If not, he may get shot himself as he rushes up on a rising chicken. Moreover, if he keeps moving about or races off to make a retrieve before command, he may put up other birds and lose his master an extra shot. When you have taught your dog to sit down to the cap gun, he has mastered one of the fundamentals of a trained shooting dog. It is to be hoped he keeps it.

After he has got the idea, take the pistol on the evening walk. Fire the pistol; and then see that he sits down. Pet him, praise him and do not forget the weiners.

The next step is to take a revolver out with blank shells and practise with it. After that, use a .410 perhaps. But remember that when you first fire the larger guns, don't be too close to your dog. He may be startled. Look at him and say firmly "Hup". Better still, perhaps, say "hup" clearly just before you fire on the first few occasions. If you proceed by these gradual stages, I venture to say that you will never have a gun-shy dog.

CHAPTER NINE

THE RETRIEVE

I can readily imagine that long before this you have become impatient to learn how you teach the dog to retrieve. Nor do you have to wait until the dog has completed his training in all that I have dealt with before you start the training in this branch. I have not mentioned it heretofore only because having started one subject I wished to finish it before commencing another.

Many people think there must be quite an art in teaching the retrieve. So far as Springers are concerned this is not correct. It seems instinctive for them to carry things in their mouths. I remember how amused I was shortly after Sally had her first pups. They were perhaps six weeks old; and half a dozen of them were staggering around the back-yard, not yet in very good control of their legs. The good lady had pitched into the yard some cut flowers — snapdragons — which had seen their best days. A short time after, I went into the yard and found at least four of them ambling proudly about, each holding a snapdragon in his little mouth.

First of all, what are you going to use for a retrieving dummy? It is better to have something with feathers, which, by the way, they love to work with. The dummy I used consisted of a golf ball in the toe of a child's sock (tied in), to give weight, then a little pillow of feathers about six inches long was thrust in and again tied. This still left a handle of six inches or so with which you could easily make a heave of seventy to one hundred feet. I am not so sure you should use this type very long. I never would again. The pups like to play with and mouth their feather dummies. If they get the habit it does not look so good to see them apparently chewing away at the game as they bring in a retrieve. A professional trainer friend of mine uses about ten inches of broom stick with duck wings or any wings tied on. The centre three or four inches are wound with canvas and each end wound with wire having jagged ends. These stick out in all directions and prick the dog if he does not carry it very gingerly, or attempts to grab it roughly. I think this is very good; but I would not start a pup on it.

Having made up a suitable dummy, take the pup out of the yard; but remain close to the gate. Throw the dummy away from the yard, and no doubt he will chase after it and pick it up. His instinct is to take it home to his kennel. In so doing, he will come by you on his way back. Intercept him and take it from him gently and give him some of the good old weiners. Keep on, and shortly the idea will register that it is much better to take the dummy to you than to take it to the kennel. You can then take the dummy on the evening walks.

But do not think that what I have described gives you the finished technique for your dog. First of all, when a bird flushes, your dog is supposed to sit down until he is given a command. Likewise, when you throw the dummy, the dog should "hup" until commanded to retrieve. Better hold your dog down, or put him on leash, and when he breaks, check him sharply, telling him to "hup". When you wish him to retrieve, give the command, "Fetch" or "Go fetch"; but always use the same command.

The proper delivery is that your dog should "hup" in front of you and hold the dummy or game until you take it from his mouth. Very early in the training, then, make him "hup" before you take the dummy. Soon in the course of the training, you can add variety by throwing the dummy when the dog is not looking. At first, throw the dummy upwind only. Then make him "hup". Point in the proper direction and tell him to fetch. He will soon get the idea. If he goes too far to right or left, he should have a signal to change direction. It is better to use vowel sounds which are quite distinctive in giving signals. I use the word "Hey" to draw the dog's attention, and then point the change of direction. Sally has shortened the operation so that "Hey" means to reverse her direction without even bothering to look.

After some training with the dummy, you can expect your dog to find the dummy in quite thick brush, if he sees it go in, or quite long grass if he is hunting without having seen you throw it. I would warn you, however, not to make your tests too hard at first. Work up to the hard ones gradually. When you start a hunt, be sure your dog is always and invariably successful in the hunt. If you make the tests too hard, he will get discouraged easily in hunting. He will then always expect the boss to come in and find the dummy or bird for him if he cannot find it readily himself, thus reversing what should be the proper relationship.

CHAPTER TEN

HUNTING

A Springer is only supposed to find and spring the game. He does not point. Once he gets on the scent of game he is going to hurry in and put it out of there. It is necessary, therefore, that he should always hunt within gun range. That means, he is restricted to a radius of twenty to thirty yards in front or either side in open or brush country. The hunting of isolated clumps of trees where chickens so love to forgather in the heat of the day will be referred to later. The well-trained Springer is supposed to cover thoroughly the ground within gun range. He should advance with his master, criss-crossing back and forth in the strip of territory forty to sixty yards wide in the centre of which his master is traveling. That means when he is twenty yards out, he must be taught to reverse. A Springer which ranges too far afield is an abomination. I once shot with a borrowed dog, said to be trained, which consistently traveled a hundred yards ahead, effectually clearing the country of game in front of me. My great regret, after the first hour, was that he would not go far enough away so that he might get lost. Eventually, we finished the day with the dog leashed to my belt. This was not so good either, as he was always pulling off some interfering stunt when I tried to get a bead on a flushed bird. Needless to say, the temptation to shoot dog instead of chicken was almost overpowering at times.

How is the dog to be taught to turn on command and eventually to confine his hunting within the proper limits without constant instruction? For this bit of training, I bought seventy-five feet of sturgeon fishing line. It is light, strong enough and does not kink up or tangle easily. Take the dog to a meadow with grass long enough to give such concealment that the dog may think there is possibly some game hidden here. Attach the sturgeon rope and give your dog the hunt signal "Hie away" or "Away you go". Send him out sideways; when near the end of the rope, give him a signal to turn. Mine is two short blasts on the whistle or, as I said previously, the verbal command "Hey". It is better to start him verbally, then, by using the verbal signal and whistle signal together for awhile, he learns either one is a direction changer. As you give the signal, check him sharply, and with the rope guide him in the other direction. If the dog tries to hunt straight ahead of you, change direction yourself so that you are going at right angles, and continue to give the change of direction signals. Always keep going forward, and do not let your dog lag behind you. Keep him in front slightly and covering both sides.

After your dog has the idea, it makes it more interesting to hunt strips of territory in which the dummy has been hidden. Throw or drop the dummy when the dog is not looking, circle around and hunt back over that spot and see whether he finds it or not. It has always seemed perfectly marvellous to me the way Sally can find her bag of feathers. To the human nose, there is not the slightest smell; but to the dog nose, it appears to be as conspicuous as a fairly odorous pig-sty is to us.

With a fairly brisk downwind, Sally has often found her dummy at surprising distances. There is no prettier sight than to see a dog in passing catch the first faint scent, turn, and then, with nose in air, trace the elusive taint to its source. Some people make it easier for the dog by placing some strong scent on the dummy. It never has been necessary with Sally; and I doubt if it is with any Springer. The locating of hidden objects, such as the dummy, gives a lot of pleasure to the dog; I suppose the equivalent of a cross-word puzzle in human terms. It is amusing to the trainer also. You can get a lot of fun all winter long by hiding a dummy in the house and sending your dog to find it. As a matter of fact, I would advise against much use of a dummy outside in winter, if there be snow on the ground. The dummy gets cold and wet and the dog does not care to pick it up. If you throw a dummy, command that it be retrieved and your dog refuses, the training has taken a backward step and a serious one. Do not risk it.

It may not be absolutely necessary to use a rope on the dog. You can keep the dog close by giving the double whistle and at the same time walking away from the dog. He will look up, see you are going away and change direction to follow you. A dog likes to go with the master. Or you can give the "hup" whistle (one blast) if the dog gets too far out, then call him in and send him out on the other side. It is always wise, when the double whistle is given for change of direction, to wave or point with the right or left arm, whichever way you wish the dog to go.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

BLUFF HUNTING

Another and different type of hunting is in the small clumps or groves in which chicken are most easily approached to within shooting range. The chance of getting close enough to shoot at prairie chicken in stubble or meadow is pretty remote nowadays in Manitoba. Consequently, most chicken are shot coming out of the clumps or groves of trees (in our country called "bluffs") in the vicinity of their feeding grounds. It is not so easy to get them out, either, particularly in hot weather, when the huntsman may often pass within half a dozen feet without a flush. If the grove or clump is twenty-five or thirty yards across, the only way to put them out is to blunder through the bush. The man in the bush will probably not get a shot; his companions in the open will of course. Believe you me, it is pretty hard work beating up that bush too. Well, a Springer should save you all that.

Two men should hunt with a Springer in this type of country, one on each side. In the smaller clumps, you can walk up each side with the dog in the centre. Stop him, if you see he is getting too far ahead, with the "hup" signal, until you catch up. In the larger clumps, say one hundred yards wide and the same in length or thereabouts, I place Sally at the down wind edge in the middle, then I walk upwind to the other end one side, my shooting companion on the other. We thus command three sides. All this time, Sally is doing a "hup," of course. When in position, I tell her "Away you go" or blow the "Come in" whistle. She disappears into the bush like a scared rabbit and the chickens, also scared, commence to boil out. As a chicken always flies up wind, or approximately so, you, if stationed thus, can generally get a shot at anything that does come out. Can you imagine the thrill of standing on one of those corners for eight or ten minutes, with a "Kuk-a-kuk-kuk" and exploding wings every minute, or less, to stimulate your heart action? On a lovely warm autumn afternoon! Oh, boy!

This training your dog to "hup" while you are out of sight, until the time is ripe, requires some care too. Start by going away farther and farther, with successive tests. If the dog gets up and runs after you, scold him, and make him return to the very place he left, and try again. Then start disappearing and make him stay "hup" till you call him. Do not get too far away. Keep popping out at him before he has time to make up his mind to look you up. Then in the field try it on small clumps of trees first.

The bush retrieve has a technique all its own for your dog too; with a particular reference to wounded birds. A winged chicken can cover a lot of distance in a hurry, once he gets out of sight, in the bush. A young dog may not get the idea, when he is put on the trail taken by a winged chicken, the first few times. Remember, the whole bush is probably full of chicken smell. Do not get discouraged. After a few experiences, he will know more about it than you ever will. When Sally was in her second season, I put her on several running birds; but she did not seem to know what the score was. Then, one day, a friend called over that he had dropped a "winged bird" and to bring Sally around. I suppose five minutes had elapsed. "The bird is right here within twenty feet," he said.

Well, her ladyship, as soon as I gave her the command to retrieve, "went away from there" with very considerable speed. In fact, to my considerable chagrin, I thought she was deserting the search for the wounded bird and just hunting the bush generally. So both of us hunted diligently where the chicken was supposed to be in the bush. In about five minutes, or more, Sally reappeared with the chicken. She came out of the bush one hundred and fifty yards away from us. How far she had gone, of course, I cannot say, but she had disappeared at full gallop. Judging from the time she took to reappear, I should say she must have chased the chicken a quarter of a mile through that bush before she got him. Apparently she had pretty thoroughly solved the problem of wounded birds in the bush, although how I do not know. She has never lost one since.

Always, she follows them at the gallop; so I take it the job is pretty easy to a dog when he knows what it is all about.



**“A DOG! A DOG!
MY KINGDOM FOR A DOG!”**

CHAPTER TWELVE

MARSH HUNTING

I have dealt with upland shooting, as the hunting of land birds is called Marsh or water shooting presents no great problem to a dog trained in the other branch. If you shoot from a land hide, the dog has nothing to do except wait for the command to fetch. In shooting from a boat, the retrieve is also the only work required. I am not particularly enamoured of using a Springer from a boat, except very early in the season. After the water has become cold, Sally shivers and shakes so much, after the first retrieve, that I have not the heart to ask her to suffer what she apparently does in a duck hunt from a boat.

Before leaving water training, I want to warn you that you will have to teach your dog to swim. This will surprise many people who think, apparently, that the Spaniels are born with an innate knowledge of swimming. However, he was not, and he will have to learn to swim, just as, for that matter, he had to learn to walk. They learn it readily though, and then the trouble is to keep them out of the water. If you have been using a dummy on land, your dog will never give up until he gets it, if you throw it into the water. There will probably be a lot of false starts and backing up; but finally, with a "do or die" attitude, he will rescue the dummy. Do not make the first few tests too difficult. After a very short practise time you will be able to heave the dummy as far out as you please. Spaniels become very good swimmers indeed, and in a surprisingly short time.

I suppose Sally had been swimming off and on for two years before she ever saw me swim. Her motherly solicitude for my efforts proved quite amusing to the family. We had gone into the Lake of the Woods country for the day, which was bright and hot. Every time we stopped near one of the numerous lakes of that gorgeous summer play-ground, Sally would cruise out into the lake. In fact, she probably spent more time in than out. In the middle of the afternoon, the son and heir and myself donned our bathing suits and plunged off the rocks. Sally was fifty yards out in the lake at the time, lazily enjoying the refreshing coolness. Immediately she came to life and swam for the master at her best speed. Obviously much concerned, she whined and whimpered continuously, until she got there. As she seemed so anxious about me, I took hold of her collar and she started for the shore. As she weighs about forty pounds, and I weigh two hundred, I am sure that she could not have towed me in. However, with a little inconspicuous paddling with the free hand, we soon got back to the rocks. It would be interesting, if we would learn surely, what goes on in our dog's mind. In this case, judging from her actions and behaviour alone, I have not the slightest doubt but what Sally in her dog-mind thought that I was going to drown unless she did something about it. She intended to and did help all she could. How much do dogs know—and how do they know? Whence came her knowledge of death—of the danger of deep water, and whence the thought that she could prevent it? Needless to say, the fact that she desired to save me was touching. And there again is a question. What is it, in that doggy mind, that arouses the impulse, the desire to save? Methinks there is more in those minds than this world wots of.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

UPLAND GAME

Up to the present, the training I have dealt with has to do with a dummy. That is a time of preparation. The introduction to real live game will be a landmark. If it is not done judiciously, I imagine it can knock all your training into a cocked hat. At least, for a time it will. The urge to capture the game is so overpowering, we can scarcely realize what it means to the dog. So be charitable if your dog, perfect on the dummy, misbehaves in the field. Remember too, the more powerful the hunting urge, the better your dog will be in the field, if you can obtain control. The great danger that you face, when the dog goes into the field, is that he will "chase," forget his manners and "hup" neither to flush, gun nor command. The pup, therefore, should be introduced to live game before he goes to field and when he can be more easily controlled.

I believe it helps a dog if he is familiarized with even barn-yard fowl. After all, it has the feathers and, I suppose, the meat smell. The first time Sally ever used her nose on a live bird, to my knowledge, was on a hen hidden in a clump of weeds in a barn-yard. By the way, she pointed with upraised paw as prettily as a setter or a pointer. Although Springers are not expected to point, it is not by any means unknown for them to do so. If you take your dog through a farm-yard with hens scuttling off all about, it will be temptation to "chase." Be prepared, have the sturgeon line on his collar. If he rushes after the fleeing birds, call "hup" sharply, and if he does not obey, set him on his haunches with the rope. Call out, as you pull, so that he will connect the two. Then scold him and feed him some more temptation until he learns that lesson.

The professional trainers use pigeons freely to train their dogs. If you can get some, they are certainly helpful. You can use them to advantage in teaching retrieving. It is better to start with a dead one first, using it as a dummy. If by any chance your dog should bite the bird, or chew it in his excitement (which is bad), you can get what is called a bridle to put on the bird. This is a tack studded girdle which encircles the bird. It does not make very good chewing and the dog will be very early broken of what can easily become a habit and one most undesirable.

If your dog is soft mouthed you can use a live pigeon for a dummy by having one wing clipped. The pigeon may look a bit bedraggled when you are through, but he won't be hurt.

I remember when Sally was quite a pup, certainly before she worked on live birds, she brought me a young robin which had fallen out of its nest. I hid it where I thought she would not find it again. As a matter of fact, she kept bringing it to me, all afternoon, as she found its new hiding place from time to time. The robin was as lively as ever when night intervened; but I imagine he was getting quite impatient at the constant interruption to his plans, whatever they were. When you throw the pigeon up, make your dog behave just as you made him behave with the dummy.

After this stage is past, I would recommend the first shooting should be over pigeons. This will entail getting the assistance of the best shot that you know amongst your friends. Get a pigeon trap too, if you can. If not, you can make the bird stay put, for a few minutes, by tucking the head under a wing and swinging the bird in a circle a few times. Place the bird in grass or under a bush. Walk up and flush the bird. Your friend will shoot. When you do this first, be sure you have a line on the dog. If he does not "hup" to flush or gun, give him command. If he chases, or breaks to retrieve before command, set him back roughly on his haunches with the line. Then make him wait in the hup position until given the command to retrieve. If the dog is hard to break of attempts to chase, or breaks on the retrieve, at this stage, it may

be necessary, or anyway advantageous, to use a choke collar, which is more severe in checking him than an ordinary collar. I would also suggest at this stage that you should have, as an extra means of restraint, a good old-fashioned buggy-whip, if you can get such a thing. It does not really hurt very much, but a dog seems to dislike the swish it makes, and is, I think, even more respectful of it than a choke collar. It has the advantage, too, that you can bring him back to his senses with a good cut at some little distance, before he is out of reach. After a time, you can get a variation by walking up on the bird and letting the dog flush it. Make him hup as it flushes.

When your dog is steady, take off the line and control him only with voice and whip if necessary. If he should break on a retrieve, start after him at once; make him drop the bird if he picks it up—throw it back, then drive him back to his post with the whip and force him to hup, until the command is given. If a bird gets away and he chases, he should be punished; but the better thing to do is to stand so close that you can reach him with the whip if he attempts to start off, and thus prevent a chase.

When you get to the point where you successfully do these training stunts, you can have practically all the pleasures of a real hunt, except that I would advise you to lay off the shooting yourself. Leave that to the friend. You will not likely have any time for the shooting, if you watch your dog properly. Remember, every time he breaks, it is a backward step, and substantially so. The wise thing to do, therefore, is to be so watchful and alert, and so close at hand, that he never does succeed in breaking.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

IN THE FIELD AT LAST

With this preliminary work over, you may step into the hunting field with some optimism; but do not be discouraged if you have many set-backs. Probably the first thing, a rabbit will jump from under your pup's feet. When that occurs, all your dog's training will vanish in the twinkling of an eye. Unless you are prepared, you will spend the next hour trudging about, asking people if they have seen a hunting dog. Whether time will eventually remove the urge to chase a rabbit or not, I do not know; but Sally is unquestionably better. But, oh! The mental anguish if she is forbidden to follow! She really moans. However, I feel it has been a decided advance that she can even hear a word of command with a rabbit in sight. Occasionally, on a winter evening, as she sleeps comfortably on a living-room rug, she will give voice to the most ecstatic yelps. I am sure that I know what is going on in Dreamland. She is just about two jumps behind a jack rabbit. There is no master to say her nay. She is gaining rapidly; and in another ten seconds, she will catch him for certain.

Well, what can be done about it? It is a fairly safe rule to shoot the rabbit first and then attend to any little chores of training that may be necessary. I suppose it is possible to have a rabbit dog which is also a bird dog; but I would prefer to ignore the rabbit altogether. Accordingly, I will not permit Sally to retrieve a rabbit or touch it in any way. In fact, I also scold her if she chases one out of a bluff or starts after one put up in the open. In short, I have tried, throughout, to give her the idea that no well-bred lady looks at a rabbit. In some parts rabbits are hunted and shot; in our province, for some reason or other, very few sportsmen will take a rabbit home. However, if you want to hunt rabbits, your dog has to behave the same as though you were on birds; the training is the same.

I would recommend that your pup be familiarized with rabbits so that he will not get the equivalent of human's "buck fever" in the field. I borrowed a couple of rabbits and kept them in a pen in the back-yard for a while. They were, of course, at all times, in open sight of Sally, with only a light chicken wire fence between. Occasionally, I let them out in the yard, first putting the sturgeon line on her ladyship. Whenever she displayed any desire to chase she was scolded and, if necessary, jerked back on her haunches.

Another training practise was to locate a rabbit from the car as we drove through the countryside. It would probably hide in the grass or stubble, having gone a short way. After putting on the sturgeon line, I would cause Sally to hunt as we walked up on the hiding spot. If the dog attempted to chase, when the game was started, she got a jar, which added to the verbal reproof she always got. If, on the other hand, your dog sits down when the game is flushed, or upon command, always praise him lavishly. Dogs are not the only ones who forget when game appears.

When your dog is reasonably obedient, you may try him without the rope. I would suggest that a whip be carried at this stage. I know Sally has a respect for a whip out of all proportion to any damage she ever suffers from it. The swish of the whip seems to make an impression even when she is so excited that a command or whistle will not register. I imagine that the lion and tiger trainer uses a whip in the cage for the same reason; the animals respect it more than anything else.

Another experience you may have is also disconcerting; that is to have your pup chase after a circling hawk, all over the landscape, so engrossed that he is perfectly oblivious to your signals. This habit is cured by the same patient methods that I have already described. It will be very helpful if you give the pup a little preliminary training in some farmer's yard, where pigeons are kept. Keep the leash on, or a line, and let him flush the birds; each time make him "hup" to the flush. Then try it with the whip; but be sure to stay close enough that you may effectively control him with the whip, in the early stages. As I have said before, and I cannot impress it too strongly, every time your dog gets away with a breach of training rules, you have a very decided set-back.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

PRAIRIE CHICKEN

Sally was trained primarily for Prairie Chicken hunting, with which, of course, goes Hungarian Partridge, as you find them together. The actual hunting is no different from the routine yard work, which I have already explained, until the bird is found anyway. When the dog first smashes into a covey, there is the possibility of his training going by the boards. He therefore should be introduced first to birds in such a way that he can be carefully controlled and made to observe his hunting manners. Do not forget that the air will be filled with (to your dog) the most delicious scent, probably on all sides. There will be the exciting thunder of wings in the take off, and also the tempting sight of birds getting up from all quarters, some of which he will be perfectly certain that he can catch (all pups have that spirit of optimism). With three of his senses pouring new and startling impressions at him, you need not be surprised if his behaviour is the very opposite of a well-trained hunting dog. In fact, expect it and be prepared for it.

If you have a good reputation with the game department, as a trustworthy man in the field with game (as I hope you have), you will probably, on request, be given a permit to train your dog on chickens before the season opens. When the young chickens are old enough to fly, you can start working your dog. You will thus have another couple of months of pleasure in the game field, almost the equal of the shooting season. A great deal of my pleasure comes from the successful hunting, as distinguished from the actual shooting. In other words, "finding" game. This is an addition to the pleasure which you will get from watching the advance in hunting knowledge made by your pupil from week to week.

However, we are still planning for the first introduction to prairie chicken in the flesh. Or is it feathers? If you have secured such a permit, locate a covey of chickens. Then put the rope on and hunt (upwind, of course) until they flush. Make your dog "hup". If he tries to break, jerk him back roughly and scold him. If he is steady, praise and pet him. By the time the first shooting season is upon you, he will, at least, have the rudiments of the game. You need not expect a really good dog in the field, however, until he has had a couple of years of shooting experience. As years go on, he will improve still more, with your patient kindly assistance, of course. If you stop teaching, or stop requiring perfect execution of what has already been mastered, your dog will start going backward as a hunting dog.

And now it is time to bring these observations on training to a close. I have pointed the way; and to say more would be a reiteration and tedious to the reader. The remainder of the path, you must traverse alone, with your four-footed student. You will require patience, self-control, firmness as well as kindness and a degree of imagination. Perhaps you, as a man, will be none the worse for some little practise in these virtues. Most of us would benefit. You will have healthful exercise and many pleasurable hours in the great out of doors. Finally, if you are lucky, you may graduate a pupil who will make the eyes of your hunting companions pop out with astonishment as they watch the accomplishments of a star trained by just an ordinary inexperienced man, even as you and I.



"A HUNTING TRIO"

The big cup belongs to
the smallest fellow.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

THE TRIALS

There is now a great deal of interest in the field trials for Springers. Perhaps a short description of one will be useful, both to the dog owner and the dog lover. The place for the trials should be a large open field with cover a foot or so in height. This type of country permits the Judges to see the dog's action throughout, and also it permits the gallery to see the dogs working. So that you may get a picture of what the dog is supposed to do, I set out the Judges' marking card used locally. The points allocated for the various steps indicate fairly accurately, I think, the importance of these things relatively.

EVENT — Class 2 AMATEUR ALL AGE	No. 7 Allison of Avandale			No. 8 Hazeldel Royal Herald			No. 9 Ch. Lindores Laughing Stock		
	B1	B2	Memo	B1	B2	Memo	B1	B2	Memo
Steadiness behind	5								
Steadiness before	10								
Quartering	10								
Hunting ability	10								
Willingness	5								
Nose	10								
Drop to flush & shot	20								
Retrieve:									
Speed	5								
Delivery	5								
Mouth	10								
General Obedience	10								

Gun Dog Club of Manitoba.
Land Spaniels Trials.
Sept. 9th, 1939.
Judges: Messrs. A. Blackie and A. B. Adamson.

The sight of a field trial crowd is always a thrilling spectacle on a bright autumn day. There will be forty or fifty dogs tied to their respective stakes. A hundred cars and a motley throng of all ages united by one common bond—dogs.

The Judges call out your entry. With dog at heel you approach the Judges, who will explain what they wish done as a test for your dog. From the time you come in sight, your dog is on trial, so have him well in hand at all times. Make him "hup" while you are getting instruction. He cannot get you into any hot water while he is on his "fanny". I think probably as well run and effective a trial as any is one where the dog is required to hunt back and forth for a couple of hundred yards. The Judges walk close behind the trainer and the guns will be one on each side of the dog handler and perhaps a little behind.

At this point, the Judges should turn your dog at right angles, and go up wind. A hundred yards or so away there will be a pheasant just released from a trap. Back and forth the dog criss-crosses and eventually he finds the scent. The bird may have remained stationary or he may have run through the cover. The dog should rout him

out by trailing. I always find it amusing to watch Sally on the trail; she bounces high in the air, with each leap her ears float out, straight from her head as she comes down, and generally speaking she gives the impression of a new-fangled aeroplane. Whether it is to get higher up and see better, or to make a big display and frighten the bird, I do not know. Anyway, she is a scream.

When the bird is flushed, the guns are supposed to drop it. I must say they do pretty well at the job usually. If the bird drops and you are lucky, your dog will put on his brakes and skid to a stop. He is supposed to sit there until the Judges order the retrieve. He then, at your command, brings the bird in, sits down in front of the trainer and holds up the bird. However, if your guns miss, after about the third shot, your dog will likely decide, if the boss wants that bird, he had better go get it for him, in person. So away he goes and chases the bird into the next county. "Is my face red?" will be your feeling. However, do not feel so badly; what with the yelping competitors at the stakes, the crowd and all the other unusual and disconcerting features, you are fortunate if your dog, on the whole, is two-thirds the dog he is on a hunting trip.

I think it is better if each dog goes over the same terrain and the birds are all released in the same spot. After all, it is a new spot to each dog as he comes up. If the Judges try to change the course each time, it makes it harder for the officials to place the birds and harder for the spectators to follow. In addition, they will probably intrude on the course and interfere with the guns or the dogs. There is this additional disadvantage in changing the course for each dog that pretty soon there is pheasant scent all over the field. When a dog is first put down and asked to hunt a certain territory, he runs into a pheasant trail of twenty minutes ago. Instead of systematically working the cover, he tries to follow the bird and ends up by getting excited and rushing about aimlessly, while the handler feels like a car driver on a steep hill who has just discovered his brakes will not work. It is not fair to the dog, the handler or the Judges, for that matter. I think it much more satisfactory to have the dogs all first hunt on territory that has no birds. The fact that other dogs have gone over it makes no difference: but the fact that a pheasant has been planted there earlier in the day surely does.

I think such a trial in the open is preferable to placing pheasants in bluffs of larger trees, although those are the places where the real hunting will be done. The Judges cannot see what the dog is doing. If the dog puts the bird out beside one handler, he has an excellent chance to control his dog. In the next case, the bird goes out on the side away from the handler and he has no chance to control his dog. That is not an even break for the dogs. After all, if what we are trying to do is to find the best dog, conditions should be as nearly alike as possible, always, so that comparisons may be made.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

A DOG IN THE FAMILY

I would not like to close this book on a solely utilitarian note. True, a hunting dog has his uses in finding game for his master and retrieving after; but he who looks upon his dog only as a useful gadget on a hunting trip is losing much of the possible joy of life. Without being too sentimentally sticky, your dog should be part of the family and an individual in whose doings you can be interested the other three hundred days in the year as well as the hunting season.

To illustrate this, I remember the Madame saying, a long time ago it is now, "Well, I must say a woman would never find it boring to be married to you, as one never knows what you will do or say next."

I remember not the immediate reason, but in memory I seem to detect a caustic note which suggests I should not attempt too energetically to recall the detail. Leave it be.

In the same way, if you are willing to assume the right attitude, you will find scarcely a day that is not enriched by some "doing" if not saying of the four-footed member of your family.

I recall the day when Sally, with a heart overflowing for the master, decided to follow him to the ends of the earth. She neither knew nor recked of the superior speed and stamina of the modern motor car over a Springer puppy's legs. It was in the midst of a spring break up. Three hours later, in a far suburb of the City, a bedraggled, lost and homesick puppy was found and reported by telephone. The later re-union with the filthy, mud-bespattered wanderer was touching, never to be forgotten.

Then again, the anxious days when she simply disappeared and an advertisement was launched as a random shaft. The furtive-eyed dog lover, very seedy, who had "found" her wandering in far parts (so he said), with the metal tag on her collar bearing her owner's name and telephone number torn off by other dogs (so he said). "Just as you see it, sir. Thank you, sir. I wouldn't take anything only I haven't had any work lately, sir."

Then the frenzied excitement of the whole family when Sally had her pups. The accouchement, with the master stealing into the basement from time to time, all evening, and discovering the gentle mother nuzzling a new black and white or liver and white baby each time, and reporting, visibly shaken after the eighth, "I'm afraid we have started something we can't stop. Should we call a vet?"

Many and many such incidents will live in your memory happily through the years.

Perhaps you too would enjoy, as my family does, the tale of "the pups which fled in the night," since the joke is on me, not you. You know, having pups at your city home is lots of fun for the first month, but not so good after they begin to roam around and become vocal. They made me feel like the Irishman who replied, when asked by a well-intentioned friend if he wanted help to hold the wildcat, "Bejabers, no! I want yez to help me let go of him."

At this time, there were six little tykes, nominally kept in a kennel, but allowed to roam at will in the back-yard to my home—so allowed in the vain hope they would discover so many interesting things that they would never find occasion to make the welkin ring over a supposedly overdue meal, or what not. To those who are not personally acquainted with the distinguished(?) author of this book, I may explain



"THE SIX PUPS"
into which fled all the devils
from all the swine of Palestine.

that he was for many years honoured by his fellow citizens with election as alderman to the Winnipeg City Council, one of our great Canadian cities. Moreover, he was honoured by his fellow aldermen with the post of Chairman of the Finance Committee, a post generally, if not in this case, reserved for those in whom they reposed unusual confidence. One lovely, balmy night in June he returned about the hour of 1:00 a.m. from a meeting of the Council, his head full of millions—deficits and surpluses. The car was safely garaged, and, as he wended towards his downy couch, he peered at the sleeping beauties in the kennel. What! Sally, the mother, missing! Well, there was nothing that could be done about it. Nevertheless a chill of premonition came over him, suggested by the recollection of sundry warnings that the neighbours did not think very much of six pups in a city back-yard (well, neither did I by this time—but what could I do about it then; I certainly wanted help badly to let go by this time). Well, to continue, it was a cloudless night, with the full moon high in the sky, beautiful, but somehow it did not look so good.

And so to bed and exhausted slumber. Another hour passed, when out on the lawn there rose such a clatter. Momma had returned and found herself locked out of the yard. The pups had heard her outside the fence and all six were loudly (putting it mildly) demanding that the boss let Momma in at once. Drugged with sleep, the boss stumbled out of bed and, pausing only for slippers, rushed out in his pyjamas, anxious only to stop the infernal din before the neighbours summoned the police. Out into the yard and there six loyal little Mother's helpers were standing on their hindlegs against the gate leading into the lane; and were they telling the neighbours what they thought of a man who would lock THEIR Momma out from the bosom of her loving family!

The yard was crossed in time that would make Percy Williams at his best look "a bit off today"; the gate opened and the family re-united. Sally was safely home. Unfortunately, attempting to avoid stepping on pups, there was an awkward interval, as Sally entered. What did three of the little hypocrites, who had been yelling so loudly for family unity, do but decide that the lane held inviting possibilities which should be explored. Well, to gloss over the sad details, the Finance Minister, clothed only in his pyjamas and brilliant moonlight, rushed up and down the lane for what seemed eternities, but was probably ten or fifteen minutes, locating and replacing pups; only returning in time to answer over the telephone the polite (?) enquiries of the neighbours. To paraphrase the good lady, "you never get bored!"

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